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edition
2002



Black History

AN AMERICAN STORY

PUBLICATION DATES: February 20 and February 27

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Recognizing Black History Makers

Black History Month was established as a tribute to the many African Americans who have greatly influenced others with their struggle for freedom and equality. Learn about these brave innovators and test your knowledge of their place in history by guessing the name of the individuals profiled. The answers are blocked-out, upside down, for your reference with their photos.

In the 1920's, the first black woman aviator takes flight

In the field of aviation, can you guess who was America's first black woman pilot in the following personal account?

I have always had a natural love of flying. Although very few women in my time became pilots, my dream was to drop being a manicurist and open a flying school for blacks and women.

After hearing that women in France flew planes, I enrolled in France's Condrau School of Aviation. At twenty-nine years old, I earned an international pilot's license. They celebrated me in the United States for being the first black woman aviator. However, I could not find employment in commercial aviation. Because of this, I headed back to Europe and

trained under famous German pilots and flew a 220 horsepower Benz motoring plane – the largest plane ever flown by a woman.

In 1926, I was invited to fly for the May Day holiday in Jacksonville, Florida. The day before the event, I took a practice run with my mechanic. To my horror, the plane spiraled out of control. Without my seatbelt on, I fell five hundred feet to the ground.

During my funeral, many black men and women pilots paid their respects by flying over the Lincoln Cemetery in Chicago to drop flowers on my grave.

(1892 – 1926)

Answer: **Bessie Coleman**



Not only have talented Blacks sold billions of tickets. They even invented the machine that dispenses the tickets.



The ticket dispensing machine, was invented by Frederick Jones, June 27, 1939, US Patent 2,163,754 • Dry cleaning process for clothes, Thomas Jennings, (First African American to receive a US Patent) March 3, 1821, US Patent 3,306X • Folding cabinet bed, Sarah Goode, (First African American woman to receive a US Patent) July 14, 1885, US Patent 322,117 • Urinalysis machine, Dewey Sanderson, July 28, 1970, US Patent 3,522,011 • Keyboard stand, J. Harding & B. Hirschenson, Feb. 23, 1993, US Patent 5,188,321 • Steam boiler furnace, Granville Woods, June 3, 1884, US Patent 299,894 • Laser surgery process for cataracts, Patricia Bath, MD, July 6, 1999, US Patent 5,919,186 • Fire escape ladder, Joseph Winters, May 7, 1878, US Patent 203,517 • Wrench, John Johnson, April 18, 1922, US Patent 1,413,172 • Disposable syringe, Phil Brooks, Apr. 9, 1974, US Patent 3,802,434 • Home security with TV surveillance, Marie V.F. Brown, Dec. 2, 1969, US Patent 3,482,037 • Automatic safety break system, Richard Spikes, Jan. 2, 1962, US Patent 3,015,522 • Street sweeper, Charles Brooks, Mar. 17, 1896, US Patent 556,711 • Map, Thomas Stewart, June 13, 1893, US Patent 499,402 • Electric heater, Ebert Stallworth, Oct. 16, 1928, US Patent 1,687,521 • Fitted bed sheet, Bertha Renman, Oct. 6, 1959, US Patent 2,907,055 • Oil stove, John Standard, Oct. 29, 1889, US Patent 413,689 • Stair-climbing wheelchair, Rufus Weaver, Nov. 19, 1968, US Patent 3,411,598 • Automatic pressure cooker & smoker, Maurice Lee, Sept. 29, 1959, US Patent 2,906,191 • Vehicular restraint system, Leslie Jones, Sept. 12, 1972, US Patent 3,690,695

From inventions like the ticket dispensing machine to the many other unknown African American achievements, Black history has touched our lives in many ways.

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The essence of blues music was legendary with this artist

In the field of music, can you guess who is this legendary blues musician and singer from Mississippi during the 1930's, in the following personal account?

They call me the "King of the Delta Blues" because of the moody way I play guitar and sing lyrics that have more agony than a Richard Wright novel. Living in Mississippi most of my life, I married young. My first wife died at the age of sixteen during childbirth. Music helped me deal with her loss, where I played guitar in jook joints and roadhouses.

Just to survive, I've had to do blues gigs everywhere I can and romanced many women along the way. My reputation as a musician and ladies' man was legendary.

During the early 1930s, I made a pact with the Devil: he can have my soul in return for musical talent. Within a year and a half, I became a master guitarist with no previous skill.



(1911 – 1938) Answer: **Robert Johnson**

Some of the records I've made are "Cross Road Blues" and "Terraplane Blues."

Many years after my death, I've influenced rock bands like Rolling Stones, Cream, Captain Beefheart and Jimi Hendrix, to return to classic blues material.

No one really knows the cause of my death. Many say it was from strychnine poisoning by a man, because I fooled around with his wife.

This inventive scientist saved lives with his blood research

In the field of Medicine, who was the famous black scientist that found innovative ways to store blood for medical emergencies, in the following personal account?

During my early years of research in the 1940s on blood, I focused on how to administer blood to patients during an emergency. Generally, blood could only be stored for seven days before it begins to spoil. I experimented with plasma, or blood without red blood cells, and discovered that plasma could substitute for whole blood. Some of the techniques that I have created were for processing and preserving plasma so that it could be stored and shipped great distances, including the development of dehydrated plasma that could be reconstituted by adding water.

During World War II, England was suffering badly against Hitler's Germany. There were thousands of casualties, and the beleaguered Royal Air Force could not maintain banked blood near the battlefield. They turned to the United States for help. I was selected to be the medical supervisor of the Blood for Britain program.

Through my successful work with blood preservation and transfusion efforts in Europe, I was enlisted by the American Red Cross in 1941 to establish a blood bank program in the United States. I initiated the use of refrigerated bloodmobiles, which the Red Cross continues to use to this day.

In 1941, the U.S. War Department ordered that blood be segregated by race. This made me real angry and upset that I resigned my position as director of the Red Cross Blood Bank Program. It wasn't until 1949 that the U.S. military stopped segregating blood.



(1904 – 1950) Answer: **Charles R. Drew**

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